

Well, this administration, they do not understand the importance of securing the border. They don't understand, if they are going to avoid being complete hypocrites, that if you are going to outlaw whatever gun a radical Islamist uses to terrorize and kill Americans, if you are going to outlaw those, then next you have to file the bill that makes the possession or purchase of a pressure cooker illegal. And we really need to go back to 9/11; they used box cutters.

Because if we are going to totally continue in this mode of refusing to recognize the problem with the murderer, the Islamic terrorist murderer, and look at only whatever weapon that murderer is using, then we are going to have to keep banning things. I am sure machetes, like were used to kill hundreds of thousands of people in Rwanda, we will have to outlaw them at some point. It will go on and on as long as we continue to ignore the true threat here to American lives in radical Islam.

And I know it sounds good. "No fly, no buy," that is clever. That is cute. But then when you have the Attorney General in front of your committee and you are wanting to know, what do you use to decide who is on the no-fly list, you can't get answers from the prior Attorney General, you can't get answers from the administration. They won't tell you.

But they want Americans to get behind this movement to allow a bureaucrat, unelected, behind the scenes—we don't even know who is doing it—to make a list of people they don't want to have guns. Maybe we could get Lois Lerner over there to help. I am sure a lot of people would love that. Make a list of who you don't want to have guns.

Unfortunately, we have seen the numbers that indicate most of the people on the no-fly list are people this administration should not have let into the country.

If we are going to do something about the murderers, let's get serious about it. Let's address radical Islam. Let's secure our border. Let's start enforcing the gun laws we have.

And let's allow the FBI to be trained to recognize what a radical Islamist believes, what they are reading, what they are doing, who they are following online, what mosque they are going to where more people are radicalized. Those are important things. And until this administration allows that to happen, we are going to keep losing precious American lives.

It has to stop. And if it is not guns, it is pressure cookers, box cutters, machetes, underwear bombs. We find out, you know, these terrorists, these radical Islamists, they have learned how to make bombs.

And on top of all of that, we have the President determined to release as many people who want to kill Americans as he possibly can out of Guantanamo Bay. Under the rules of war for

civilized societies, when someone declares war on your country and you capture any of their warriors, you hold on to them, in civilized society, until such time as their friends and allies say we are no longer at war. Then you let them go.

And if their friends and allies keep fighting for 30 years, you hold on to them for 30 years, and then maybe they can help persuade them to stop fighting. But you don't let warriors go while the war is still going on.

Because, as we have seen—and it was repugnant to me to have a spokesman for this administration say, basically, well, we can't say that people we have released from Guantanamo have killed Americans, but I guess we could say, in essence, that people we have released—well, that Americans would not be dead if we hadn't released certain people from Guantanamo.

□ 1700

My word, let's quit playing the games and quit releasing people who want to kill Americans, who are at war with us, who were at war with us when they were captured, and whose friends are still at war with us.

Let's hold them at Guantanamo until their friends say, "We are no longer at war." Then they can be released, unless they have committed war crimes. If they have, then at that point we will try them for those crimes like Nuremberg. That is what a civilized society does. You don't release warriors to go kill more Americans while the war is going on.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

GUN VIOLENCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. CICILLINE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Speaker, this is the last hour that Congress will meet before the 7-week recess that the Republicans scheduled for today. We are going to devote this last hour to focus on an issue incredibly important to the communities of the people we represent and to this country, and that is the issue of gun violence.

As you may recall, Mr. Speaker, we had a sit-in where we came to the House floor to protest the congressional inaction in moving forward on sensible gun safety legislation, to bring attention, to break through this logjam and force our colleagues on the other side of the aisle to bring these bills to the floor for an up-or-down vote.

We tried motions to recommit and efforts to add these pieces of legislation to bills that were moving as amendments and every mechanism we could to try to force some action because the American people are demanding action—asking—demanding that we do

something in the face of the epidemic of gun violence in this country.

We talk a lot about gun violence, but I think it is important to recognize this is a uniquely American problem. We kill each other in this country with guns 297 times more than Japan, 49 times more than France, and 33 times more than Israel, just to give you some comparisons. Every day, 297 people in America are shot with a gun, and each day, 89 of these people die. On average, 31 Americans are murdered with guns every day, and 151 are treated for gun assault in an emergency room. Thirty thousand Americans die every year at the hands of a gun, and the United States firearm homicide rate is 20 times higher than the combined rates of 22 countries that are our peers in wealth and population. So it is important, as we make this final plea, to understand that this epidemic of gun violence is a uniquely American problem.

We just marked, the day before yesterday, the 1-month anniversary of the assault in Orlando at the Pulse nightclub that took the lives of 49 young people. We just marked the horrific occurrence in Dallas that took the lives of five American heroes, Dallas police officers. It feels like every day there is another mass shooting or a gun tragedy that we hear about and read about in this country.

What we ask the Republican House leadership is to bring two bills to the floor. There are, I think, 217 bills in total that will respond to gun violence in a variety of different ways, but we said let's start with the easy pieces of legislation, legislation that is widely supported by the American people that will make a real difference in reducing gun violence in this country and keeping guns out of the hands of people who shouldn't have them—that is, universal background checks to make sure that someone doesn't get a gun who is not permitted to have a gun under our laws, and keeping them out of the hands of domestic abusers, criminals, and suspected terrorists.

The second one is the no fly, no buy. It says, look, if you are on a terrorist watch list and we have determined you are too dangerous to get on an airplane, then you are certainly too dangerous to go into a gun store and buy any gun you want.

So those two pieces of legislation, which are really common sense, would be an important first step to demonstrate to the American people that we understand our responsibility to take some action to reduce gun violence in this country and to keep guns out of the hands of people who should not have them.

Rather than taking up those bills, regrettably, our colleagues on the other side of the aisle adjourned, and they went flying out that door so they could go home and enjoy a holiday in the summer with their family and friends without ever taking up a single piece of legislation to address gun violence.

We tried in every way to say to our colleagues: Bring these bills to the

floor for a vote. If you don't support them, make your arguments against them. Let the American people hear you defend that we shouldn't have universal background checks and that it is okay for someone on the terrorist watch list to buy a gun. But come to the floor, make your argument, and vote. That is what we get sent here to do. Give us a vote.

Instead, they went out that door, and by doing so, by failing to act, they dishonored the memory of the thousands and thousands of Americans who have lost their lives to gun violence.

Mr. and Mrs. Wright, Maria and Fred Wright, were here the day before yesterday on the 1-month anniversary of Orlando. They came to the Capitol rather than spending time at home continuing to grieve about the murder of their son, Jerald, at the Pulse nightclub. They came here to talk to Members of Congress. They wrote an op-ed that was published on the day of their visit to Washington.

They said: "While in D.C., we don't want just thoughts and prayers from Members of Congress. We want them to look us in the eyes and tell us: How will they work to make our Nation safer against gun violence? How will they perform their constitutional duty to 'insure domestic tranquility' and 'promote the general welfare'—some of the main roles of government according to our Constitution? How will they work to stand up to the extremist gun lobby and urge their fellow Members to do the same?"

That is what they wrote: Look in our eyes. They lost their son, and what Congress did, regrettably, is nothing. They recessed for 7 weeks.

Mr. Speaker, we have a moral obligation to protect the lives and well-being of our constituents. That is our most sacred responsibility as Members of Congress.

We do that in a variety of different ways. We do that by responding to public health crises, like the Zika virus, which we also failed to do. We do that by making sure people can have safe drinking water in places like Flint and cities all across this country, which we failed to do. We do that by protecting our constituents from the ravages of gun violence in this country, and we did nothing.

We have a responsibility as Members of Congress, when faced with these sorts of epidemics, to do something. People who are living in communities all across this country, who are living with the consequences of this gun violence, say: What are you doing to stop it?

They know we can't pass one law that is going to stop everything, but, taken together, we can pass legislation—particularly these two bills—that will substantially reduce the likelihood that dangerous people will get guns and harm the communities we represent.

I will continue to add my voice to this fight, as I know many members of our caucus will.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the distinguished gentleman from California (Mr. THOMPSON). He really has led our effort as the chair of the Democratic caucus on gun violence prevention and someone who has been a great champion in this effort.

Mr. THOMPSON of California. I thank the gentleman for yielding, and I thank him also for taking the time and the effort to put this Special Order together on such an important issue, important to all Americans.

I was a little bit taken aback. I came down to the floor early to participate in this Special Order, and I heard my friend from across the aisle who preceded us in Special Orders talking about the effort on the part of Democrats today in our 1-minute remarks of pushing for a vote on the issue of gun violence prevention.

Mr. CICILLINE, I think, laid it out clearly what it is we are trying to do. We want a vote on two bills. One is a bill that would require background checks for anyone who purchases a firearm through a commercial sale. So it would expand existing law that says that you have to have a background check if you purchase a firearm at a licensed dealer to include other commercial sales: ads in a newspaper, online purchases, or gun show purchases.

Then the other bill is the bill that has been referred to as no fly, no buy, that says, if you are too dangerous in the eyes of the FBI to fly on an airplane, then you shouldn't be able to go into a gun store, pass a background check, and buy any gun that you want.

My friend from across the aisle said that this was clever and cute. Mr. Speaker, make no mistake about it: this is not clever nor is it cute. This is serious business. People are dying every day at the hands of someone using a firearm.

In the 3½ years since 20 elementary schoolchildren were murdered at Sandy Hook in Connecticut, 1,196 mass shootings have taken place in our country. Over 34,000 people have been killed by someone using a gun. We have had over 500 legislative days. What have we done during that time? We have had 31—31—moments of silence for those people who were murdered, but we have had zero votes on the issue of gun violence prevention, not one debate and not one vote on expanding background checks.

The gentleman across the aisle, I think, used some misleading statements when he talked today. He said that we should enforce the laws that are on the books. Well, when the background check bill was put into the law, there weren't many people buying guns online. As a matter of fact, we weren't buying much online. It was a long time ago, and online shopping had not come about as it is today, so the law didn't include that. So, obviously, we need to look at change in bills as we go.

What we want to do is we want to make sure that criminals, terrorists, and the dangerously mentally ill have a difficult time getting guns. The best

way to do that, and our first line of defense in accomplishing that, is background checks.

You know, Mr. Speaker. You have been in the courtroom. You have seen these things happen before. You know this issue inside and out. They work.

Every day, 170 felons are prohibited from purchasing firearms because of background checks. Every day, 50 domestic abusers are prohibited from buying firearms because of the background checks. Yet they can leave the gun store, they can go online or go to a gun show, and they can buy the same gun without a background check that they were prohibited from buying in the gun store.

My friend from across the aisle, I think, was also misleading when he said that Democrats want to focus on the gun. There is no focusing on the gun. We know that guns don't get up and shoot somebody on their own. We are trying to focus on the person trying to buy that gun. That is why we want to do a background check. If the person is a criminal, if the person is a terrorist, if the person is a drug addict or a domestic abuser or dangerously mentally ill, the law says then they can't buy a gun at a licensed dealer.

Well, we have got this gaping loophole where they can leave the licensed dealer, they can go to the gun show or they can go online, and they can buy that gun. We want to stop that from happening.

My friend from across the aisle also said that these laws don't work. Well, we know they work. I just gave you the numbers on how many felons and domestic abusers are stopped every day from purchasing a gun. But you can look at the studies that were done in two States.

One was in Connecticut. Connecticut passed a permit-to-purchase law in their State where you had to get the background check to purchase. What happened in that State after that law was passed? A 40 percent drop in homicide by firearms. Now, go down the road to Missouri, who repealed their requirement to permit-to-purchase and what happened? A 25 percent increase in homicides by firearms.

They work. These laws work, and we ought to make sure they apply to gun sales in all commercial settings.

My friend across the aisle in his Special Order said that you just have to look at States where there are tough laws regarding gun violence to see that they don't work. Well, it is really interesting because there are just 10 States that supply about half—49 percent—of the guns that cross State lines before being recovered in crimes.

□ 1715

Those States account for nearly 21,000 interstate crime guns recovered in 2009. So people go to the areas where it is easy for them to access firearms, they buy them, and then they bring them to the other States and they use them.

It is not enough just to have a tough law. My home State of California requires background checks for all gun purchases. It is not a big deal. I bought a gun over the last break. As you all know, my friends here know, I am a gun guy. I support the Second Amendment. I have firearms. I use them. I collect them. I hunt with them.

I bought one over the last break from a very close personal family friend, yet the law says we still had to get a background check. It wasn't any heavy lift. I took it to a dealer, they did the background check, and in 10 days I got my gun.

California is a stricter State than many. Nineteen States go beyond what the Federal Government requires. The Federal Government requires, remember, that you have to have a background check if you purchase a gun at a licensed dealer. California says all guns have to go through a background check. As I say, it is not a heavy lift.

But Californians can leave our State and they can go to another State, one of the 34 States that only have the Federal requirement—they can go to another State, they can go online, they can go to a newspaper ad, or they can go to a gun show—and they can purchase the same firearm that they would be prohibited from purchasing if they had to undergo a background check. We know it happens.

At the State of the Union, when we honored victims of gun violence, a man from Wisconsin was here because his sister took out a restraining order on her husband. Her husband tried to buy a gun, and that restraining order stopped him from being able to buy the gun. Well, he went home. He went online. He found someone that was selling the same gun, who wasn't a licensed dealer. He bought that gun. He took it to the beauty shop where his wife was, and he killed her, and he killed two other people.

Now, as Mr. CICILLINE said, we can't stop every act of gun violence by passing any bill. And the people that say they don't support the background check bill because it wouldn't have worked in Mr. CLYBURN's district in Charleston, or it wouldn't have worked in Mr. PERLMUTTER's district in the movie theater, or it wouldn't have worked in Orlando at the Pulse nightclub, they say, well, we only will support a bill that will work in all of these cases, well, the only bill that will do that is getting rid of all guns. There is not support on our side of the aisle for that, and there is not support on the other side of the aisle for that. It is a disingenuous argument.

Everything that we can do to stop people from being killed by someone with a gun we should be working on doing. The bills that we are talking about today are bipartisan bills. You know that, Mr. Speaker. Our bill has not only bipartisan support, it has 197 coauthors. I don't think there has ever been a time in the history of Congress that there has been a gun bill in this

House that has had 197 coauthors. That is really out of the ordinary.

Folks have lined up to support this because they know it is good public policy. The American people know it is good public policy. Ninety percent of the American population believe that we should expand background checks to include all commercial sales. Eighty-five percent believe that we should enact the no fly, no buy. They say if you are too dangerous to fly, you should be too dangerous to buy. They are bipartisan. Both of those measures are pro-Second Amendment. They are certainly commonsense, and they most certainly have the support of the majority of the American people.

We should be doing everything we can to pass those bills. We shouldn't be going home. And I know that sometimes a hyperbole takes over. I don't for a moment think that every Member in this body is going home to sit on the beach. I know what most Members do, if not all Members. We go home and we work in our districts. You are going to do that. I am going to do that. Mr. CLYBURN, Mrs. BEATTY, Mr. CICILLINE, we are all going to go home, we are going to meet with our constituents, and we are going to do our work.

But the point that we are trying to make is we shouldn't leave this body, we shouldn't leave this House, the people's House, to go home to do our work there without first passing this gun violence prevention legislation that is bipartisan, supported by the American people, and pro-Second Amendment—measures that will do a little bit more to keep guns away from criminals, terrorists, and the dangerously mentally ill.

Mr. Speaker, we should be doing that. We should be doing that here today before we leave on this 7-week recess.

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. CLYBURN), the distinguished assistant leader.

Mr. CLYBURN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding to me, and I thank him so much for doing this Special Order.

I want to begin, first of all, by thanking my colleague on the other side of the Capitol, Senator TIM SCOTT, for a tremendous speech he gave on the floor of the Senate last evening. I thank him so much for sharing with the American people an issue that has, for some reason, converged with our overall discussions of gun violence.

Now, tonight, at around 7:30, we are going to have a national SpeakOut here on the west lawn of the Capitol. We will be speaking out on this whole issue of gun violence. I am particularly interested in one part of our effort dealing with background checks.

Now, some have said that background checks legislation that we are proposing would not have had any impact on most of these issues, if not all. Well, I beg to differ when it comes to Charleston and the Emanuel 9.

The facts are very clear that the gentleman who purchased the gun that he used to murder those nine souls doing their Bible study at Emanuel AME Church June 17 of last year was not eligible by law to have purchased a gun because of a 72-hour rule that we have in our background check laws. If you apply to purchase a gun and the background check is undertaken and it is not completed in 3 days, you can go back and get the gun, irrespective of whether or not you are eligible to have it.

Now, thanks to the Government Accountability Office, 2 days ago, they issued a study, and the study covered a period of 10 years, from 2006 to 2015. Here is what they have revealed. During that 10-year period, 89,000 requests to purchase a gun were denied because of domestic abuse; however, 6,700 were purchased by people who were ineligible because of that 3-day rule.

Now, over 90 percent of the people who apply to purchase a weapon have their background checks completed within 2 days, but there is that 10 percent that require additional scrutiny. We don't know whether or not people intentionally give the wrong information. If someone really wanted to curtail the law and knows what the law is, that person could very well give the wrong address, give the wrong middle initial, do something to cause the background check to be extended beyond the 3-day period.

The gentleman who purchased the gun in the case of the Emanuel 9, it was an interesting confluence of mistakes. It had nothing to do with the bureaucracy. For some strange reason, when he was arrested for his problem, rather than taking him to the Columbia jail, they took him to the West Columbia jail. So, when they looked for his record, they looked for the record in Columbia. But for some strange reason, the record was across the river in West Columbia. By the time they detected what the problem was, the 3 days had expired and he was able to purchase a gun.

Within days of that purchase, he went online and he studied the history of Emanuel AME Church, the church where Denmark Vesey organized an insurrection in 1822 in the basement of Emanuel Church. He looked at that history. He saw Emanuel AME Church as one of the most historical African American churches not just in the State of South Carolina, but in the country, and he targeted that church.

He went there, invited himself into the Bible study with these blessed souls, and sat with them for an hour. Then he got up, took out the gun that he had bought, which he was not eligible to purchase, and began to murder them systematically. One woman, Ms. Sanders, is here in Washington and will be here with us this evening, lost her son, her aunt, and a cousin. The reason she is still with us today is because she played dead under a table while covering up her little grandchildren. She

watched her son walk up to the shooter and say: Why are you doing this? We mean you no harm.

But he said: I have got to do it. Why?

Because I want to start a race war.

Well, he did not start a race war. This whole country saw what forgiveness was all about. Within 48 hours, these family members, these survivors, were in a judicial courtroom. They looked at the perpetrator, and one after the other looked at him and said: I forgive you.

Well, I am appreciative of my constituents for forgiving, but I believe, as their representative here in this body, it is incumbent upon me to do whatever I can—and, hopefully, we will be joined by others in this body—to close this loophole. Let's make sure that gun purchases are not made until the background check is completed. If it takes 4 days or 5 days, what is that all about? What we must do is make sure that demented criminals and domestic abusers are not allowed to purchase guns because we know from history that they mean no good when they do.

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his eloquent words.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the distinguished gentlewoman from Ohio (Mrs. BEATTY).

Mrs. BEATTY. Mr. Speaker, first let me thank my good friend and colleague from the First District of Rhode Island (Mr. CICILLINE) for leading tonight's Special Order hour on the Republicans' decision to leave for 52 days without taking any action to address the gun violence epidemic in this country.

□ 1730

Mr. Speaker, as I sat here this evening, listening to my colleague on the other side of the aisle repeatedly talking about this administration and how this administration's work had brought great harm to this America that we live in, well, Mr. Speaker, tonight, as I sit here and listen to my colleagues and to the great history lesson that we just received from Congressman CLYBURN in his reminding us of all the things that happened with the Charleston 9, I reflect on just the other day when four Black men went on national TV—not elected officials, not scholars in the world that we represent, but athletes who stood, dressed in black—who were there to honor another athlete, the great Muhammad Ali.

Those four young Black men, with young minds, decided that they would take their time on national TV—unrehearsed, unscripted by folks like you and me, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to share, just very briefly, what Carmelo Anthony said when he came to the podium.

"Tonight, we cannot ignore the reality of the current state of this America we live in. The events of the past week have put a spotlight on injustice and the distrust and anger that plagues so many of us."

Mr. Speaker, he said: "The system is broken. The problems are not new, and the racial divide is definitely not new, but the urgency to create change is at an all-time high."

Then Chris Paul followed him and said: "We stand here tonight, accepting our role in uniting communities to be the change we need to see."

Now, think about that—to go from distrust, Mr. Speaker, to trust and have this young athlete speak like we should be speaking, as Democrats and Republicans, in talking about change.

Do you know why they were saying this, Mr. Speaker?

It is because innocent lives are being taken because we don't have simple gun laws, because we can't close the loop. Certainly we should have the intellect to understand that if you can't fly, you can't buy.

When I listen to my colleagues say that we have not brought before this House laws that we can implement, that is not my responsibility as a Member of this Congress; it is our responsibility. It is not the Democrats' responsibility to do this. It is not the Black men's of the Congressional Black Caucus or the Hispanic men's of their caucus or the Democrats'. Mr. Speaker, we are better than this. It is our united responsibility.

When we stand here and make a joke of Black Lives Matter, let me tell you, Mr. Speaker, Black lives do matter—but blue lives matter, and all lives matter.

If that mother, like the mother that I am bringing from my Third Congressional District tonight, tells the story of her 13-year-old daughter who was sitting in her kitchen as her windows were riddled with gun bullets that killed that child, that matters to her.

Do you think the wife of that murdered police officer doesn't value that blue White life as much?

When these young folks come here tonight, many of them representing Black Lives Matter, they will come as these four athletes did on TV the other night. It is because they feel the pain, and they don't have an outlet, they don't have a place. They could march anywhere, but they are marching at the United States Capitol.

Do you know why?

They are coming here hoping for hope. They are coming here hoping for leadership. They are coming here hoping that we will unite one another and bring that trust.

Let me now tell you what the next speaker, Dwayne Wade said. "The racial profiling has to stop. The shoot-to-kill mentality has to stop. Not seeing the value of Black and Brown bodies has to stop."

Then let me tell you, as he ended with "enough is enough" and, "As athletes, we challenge you, America," then LeBron James, from my great State of Ohio, came to the microphone and said: "We all feel helpless and frustrated by the violence, but that is not acceptable. It's time to look in the

mirror and ask ourselves: What are we doing to create change?"

He knew that night that that was not what he was there to do, but he said it was his legacy that he wanted to talk about, and he wanted to use that moment in time for a call to action.

Mr. Speaker, I come with that same call to action tonight. I come to say to you that you should be better than what we are doing.

I am not pleased that it is empty on this side of the aisle. Mr. Speaker, I want America to know that I came here tonight willing to stand up and to talk to the thousands of folks who will come with that pain, with that anger. I want them to know that, as Democrats, we are here today because we know we can be so much better. We are not asking for a lot. We are asking for four simple bills. I won't walk you through them because you have heard them, Mr. Speaker. You have heard my colleagues repeatedly today through 1-minutes, through 5-minutes, through a Special Order hour, come and ask for help.

I don't know what more we can do tonight, but as you go home, I ask you to think about those lives that were taken, whether it was an innocent, young boy, a Trayvon Martin, a Tamir Rice, a Jordan Davis, or a Sandra Bland, whether it were those children at Newtown, whether it was someone in a theater or on a football field or in a restaurant, whether it was in Minnesota or in Baton Rouge or, yes, whether it was the Emanuel nine in South Carolina, or whether it were those innocent police officers in Dallas.

I will sleep well tonight, Mr. Speaker, and I want America to know that I will sleep well tonight because I came here to unite the communities, to unite Democrats and Republicans. I want America to know that I am talking to an empty audience of seats on the other side of the aisle because they went home.

I say to you: America deserves better. The innocent families who lost their loved ones deserve better. Yet, we are trapped here with the inactivity of Congress. We deserve to do more for our communities.

Mr. CICILLINE. I thank the gentlewoman for her eloquent words. I appreciate the passion she has brought to this not only tonight, but throughout the week and the last many weeks.

I am particularly proud, Mr. Speaker, of the leadership of our caucus. From the very first night when we came to the floor to attempt to break through the logjam of inaction by our Republican colleagues, it really galvanized our caucus. It galvanized the country that, likewise, is demanding action, demanding that we enact commonsense gun safety legislation.

We heard eloquent words from so many members of our caucus through those 26 hours; but so much leadership was provided by the leaders of our caucus, who, in the past several weeks, have used every occasion, every possible opportunity, to force a vote on

two commonsense gun safety provisions—to keep guns out of the hands of suspected terrorists and universal background checks—in amendments, in attempting to attach it to bills, in motions to recommit, in every way that they could.

I yield to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER), our distinguished Democratic whip, who has been a great champion on this issue and who has been a great leader in the fight for responsible gun safety legislation.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding. I thank him for taking this Special Order.

I thank the gentlewoman from Ohio for that eloquent and passionate plea to put negligence aside, to put inaction aside, and to understand that in this House, we have an opportunity to take action.

Mr. Speaker, it is hard to think of LeBron James' feeling helpless—one of the greatest athletes of our time and, perhaps, of all time. He is an extraordinarily powerful individual. For him to stand and say, I am frustrated and I feel helpless, in part, that is because he has sent people to Congress. He and 320 million Americans have sent people to Congress to respond and to keep them safe.

Can we keep them perfectly safe?

We cannot.

John Kennedy was speaking to a group of parents of children with disabilities. He stood before them and said: "Although these children have been the victims of fate, they shall not be the victims of our neglect."

Mr. Speaker, today, tomorrow, the week after, and for months to come, we do not know how many people will be victims of today's neglect; victims because we took a walk today rather than action on this floor of the people's House. We will never know the price that we will pay, but we surely know there will be a price.

Speaker RYAN, upon taking the Speaker's gavel, called for a return to regular order, openness, and transparency; and I would like to read his quote because it was a good quote.

He said: "We need to return to regular order."

Then he said: "We will not duck the tough issues."

Today we ducked. Today we said we are not going to apply our ability to take action. We are going to go home.

The American people, Mr. Speaker, ought to know that we weren't scheduled to go home until tomorrow night, and the American people ought to know that the President of the United States asked us, some 5 months ago, to apply resources so as to protect the public health from the Zika plague. So not only have we not dealt with gun violence, but we have not dealt with two simple but profound, commonsense actions.

Mr. Speaker, I could walk across to that rostrum where Republicans usually speak. I am at the rostrum where Democrats usually speak.

□ 1745

There ought to be a rostrum in the middle where we speak not as Republicans, not as Democrats, but as Americans, as parents, as husbands, as wives, as neighbors, as friends to protect and preserve not only the Constitution of the United States but their lives and their future.

Congresswoman BEATTY said it so well, "Black lives matter," and then she added quickly, "Blue lives matter." And of course she meant those who protect us and are sworn to put themselves at risk so that we may not be at risk. We lost five of them and we lost the young man in Minnesota and a not-quite-so-young man but another man in Louisiana just these past few days.

Mr. Speaker, you said, "We will not duck the tough issues." We don't think this is a tough issue, but maybe some people do. We think this is commonsense reason to pass a bill that says, if you are too dangerous to fly on an airplane in America, you are too dangerous for us to sell you a gun.

If we accept the premise that we ought to have background checks, which we do, then those ought to be not in just some cases but in every case so that we are not keeping people safe just in some instances but in every instance.

"We will not duck the tough issues." The Speaker then said, "We will take them head-on."

We have been asking now for years and certainly very directly for a number of weeks now to bring these bills to the floor that provide for universal background checks and for protecting people from people who are dangerous and who would buy guns but are too dangerous to fly on our airplanes.

That is all we are asking. We are not even asking that it pass. We will vote for it. We hope a large number of our colleagues will vote for it. Because I tell you, the American people are speaking from that middle mike, which does not exist. But their voice in the middle here is 90 percent of them saying, "Please, Congress, do these actions."

The Speaker went on to say, "We should not hide our disagreements." The American people don't have much of an agreement; it is nine to one.

"We should not hide our disagreements," he said. "We should embrace them. We have nothing to fear from honest disagreements honestly stated."

Bring them to the floor, Mr. Speaker.

Tonight, two friends of mine, Wendy Edmonds and Bobbe Frasier, will be with us tonight at 7:30. They lost Sylvia Frasier, their sister, at the United States Navy Yard, just a few blocks from where we stand, by someone who essentially invaded the Navy Yard and killed a significant number of people.

But the Congress has gone home. The leadership believes there is no more business left to do before going home to their districts for the next 7 weeks.

Tell that to the people of Flint, who 24 months after the lead was discovered

which gave such danger to their children and damaged their children—tell that to them. They have been waiting eagerly for Congress to take up legislation providing them with critical resources to recover from the lead poisoning in their water supply. They shall not be the victims of our neglect, but they are. We have gone home.

Tell that to millions of Americans in Puerto Rico and across this country who are at risk this summer of exposure to the Zika virus. Tell that to the millions of families who have been affected by gun violence and are looking to Congress to enact commonsense gun safety reforms.

So I tell my Republican colleagues, the Speaker, the majority leader, there is much work to be done right now. It is irresponsible that the majority would continue to obstruct and delay any action on these three pressing national crises. Instead, we should be remaining in Washington until they are addressed.

We saw the other night a bill pass from conference with no debate in just a few minutes—a major piece of legislation. Time is not the problem. Commitment is the problem.

Democrats, as Congresswoman BEATTY said so eloquently, are ready to stay here and do the hard work. And I am asking the Speaker and the majority leader to commit to doing the same.

The American people expect us to do our jobs, not just shrug and go home. We owe the American people that duty and that action. Let us vote.

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Speaker, it gives me pleasure to yield to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI), the distinguished Democratic leader. I thank her again for her extraordinary leadership on this issue.

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. CICILLINE) has been such a leader on this issue. He was a leader in the sit-in that happened a few weeks ago on the floor of the House. I can attest personally. I bore witness to his staying here all night, for 25 hours straight.

He organized us on the steps of the Capitol on Tuesday evening, the 1-month anniversary—bad, sad observance of the 1 month since Orlando, where a hate crime was committed against young people gathered for a night of enjoyment, instead to have the end of their life occur. And why? Because of a hate crime. And why? Because we don't have commonsense gun laws in our country.

He also organized us all day in scores of 1-minutes on behalf of House Democrats. But I want to also thank him for putting this Special Order together in preparation for the event that we will have on the steps of the Capitol later this evening.

I associate myself with the remarks of our distinguished whip, Mr. HOYER, when we say to the Republicans, why have you left here? Congresswoman BEATTY has the same message. What

more important thing do our Republican colleagues have to do than to be in session, to do their job, for us all to do our job for the American people?

We should be here to do our job on Zika, which the President over 4 months ago requested funding to fight Zika, and now it is spreading in our country.

We should be here for funding for opioids. We passed a wonderful bill—good policy, but no funding; therefore, not effective.

We should be here to pass the funding for opioids and Flint, Michigan. What more important thing do you have to do, my colleagues on the Republican side of the aisle, than to meet the needs of the children of Flint, Michigan?

Here we are, continuing to have our conversation about commonsense gun violence protection.

I want to quote from President Lyndon Johnson. In the aftermath of the assassination of Robert F. Kennedy, just weeks after the fatal shooting of Martin Luther King, Jr., and only a few years after President John F. Kennedy was shot, President Johnson pressed Congress to enact gun control legislation that he sent to Capitol Hill years earlier. He had sent it after the Kennedy assassination.

LBJ ordered all of his staff and urged allies in Congress to act swiftly. Here is what he said that was as relevant now as it was then. President Lyndon Johnson, following the deaths of Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy, said: "We only have 2 weeks, maybe only 10 days, before the gun lobby gets organized. We've got to beat the NRA into the offices of Members of Congress."

Decades. This has been going on for decades. When a President of the United States, after the assassination of a President; an icon, Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr.; Senator Robert Kennedy—well, actually he was a candidate for President at the time, Senator Kennedy was. "We've got to beat the NRA into the offices of Members of Congress." Well, obviously, we haven't, because they sort of live there. They sort of live there.

And when he signed the watered-down version of the bill he proposed, he said, "The voices that blocked these safeguards were not the voices of an aroused nation. They were the voices of a powerful gun lobby, a gun lobby that has prevailed for the moment in an election year." Sound familiar?

LBJ went on to say, "We have been through a great deal of anguish these last few months and these last few years—too much anguish to forget so quickly. So now we must complete the task which this long-needed legislation begins."

Here we are decades later, still recognizing the fact that the National Rifle Association, the gun lobby, has so much power over Members of Congress. It has so much power over their political survival, some of our colleagues think.

I ask you, Mr. Speaker: What is more important, the political survival of Members of Congress beholden to the gun lobby or the survival of little kindergarten students in Newtown, Connecticut? What is more important, the political survival of Members of Congress or the personal survival of members gathered in church in South Carolina, or young people gathered for an evening of fun in Orlando—the list goes on and on—or our dear police officers killed in Dallas.

What is it? How do you explain it to people, except to say there is a large element of cowardice. There is a large element of putting people's own political survival over the oath of office that we take to protect the American people.

Excuse me. This is so emotional.

I salute my colleague Congresswoman BEATTY for her very passionate and intellectual statement that she made in recognizing the role of athletes. I am very proud of the Golden State Warriors. They have long been involved in this, as has the NBA and the players that she mentioned. This was another venue for them to speak out. They have been eloquent on the subject for a while.

I salute my colleague Mr. CICILLINE, not only for his work on gun issues, but on hate crimes as well, because that was a hate crime in Orlando.

Mr. CLYBURN is going to be outside on the steps of the Capitol with a large crowd of people so we can listen to the stories of those affected. If only our colleagues would open their hearts and their minds and not have a tin ear to the voices of the families, listen to the families.

One of our own colleagues, Congressman BOBBY RUSH of Illinois, he and his family are survivors of the death of their son. When he tells the story of how he learned of his son being shot but then of his son passing, it is so eloquent and so compelling. And he talks about the shriek, the cry, the scream of a mother who has just found out that her child is dead from a gunshot.

How much of this can we take? It is always impressive, I have to say, to witness the degree of tolerance that our colleagues have for the pain of others. How much pain do people have to suffer for people to hear, to learn, to judge?

Was it George Bernard Shaw who said the sign of a truly intelligent person is that he is informed by statistics? The statistics are overwhelming: 91 a day; over 1,000 mass murders, which is defined as 4 or more people being slaughtered in 1 incident—all of that since Newtown.

□ 1800

I know my time is drawing short, but I will just say this: these are statistics. More important than that, they are human lives.

How many more human lives? How many shrieks of mothers learning—and dads as well.

He spoke of hearing his wife's shriek; the piercing sound of a mother's scream.

I heard one of the mothers from Orlando when she was suspicious that her son might have been killed. She said: I don't know. We don't have any evidence, but nobody has seen him. He isn't at the hospital. I am afraid I have become a member of the club, the club of women, moms who have lost their children. It is a terrible club to be a member of, and I want to speak out against gun violence so that there aren't more moms added to the club.

But that doesn't seem to resonate with our colleagues. They don't even give the courtesy of attendance to hear the concerns that people have.

Is it indifference? Do they not know or do they not care? Or is it some combination?

Whatever it is, it is a disgrace to our oath of office to protect the American people.

Be assured of this, be assured of this: we are not going away. You will see us. You will see the faces of those moms, all the organizations that have come together, the millions of people, the high percentages, 85, 90 percent of the American people of all parties and no parties who support the legislation that we are asking for. We are not going away until we have commonsense gun violence prevention laws passed in our country to save lives, to save lives. That is the challenge we offer to our Republican colleagues.

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

REQUEST TO BE GRANTED ADDITIONAL SPECIAL ORDER TIME

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that we have an additional hour to continue to speak about the urgency of gun violence prevention action. We have many Democratic colleagues who are here who are seeking time to implore the Speaker to come back.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair cannot entertain that request.

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY

Mr. CICILLINE. Point of parliamentary inquiry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman will state his parliamentary inquiry.

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Speaker, why is the Chair not capable of entertaining a request for unanimous consent to provide for additional time to address this urgent public health crisis?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Speaker's announced policy on Special Order Speeches does not allow the Chair to entertain that request.

GUN VIOLENCE IN AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MAXINE WATERS) for 30 minutes.